

Edward S. Underwood House
28 John Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island .

HABS No. RI-244

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
141-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-244

EDWARD S. UNDERWOOD HOUSE

HABS

RI,

4-PROV,

141-

Address: 28 John Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island

Present Owner: John Thayer Company, Providence

Present Occupant: Mrs. LaCeze

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement of Significance: This is an example of a smaller, two-story, frame house of the 1820's.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1820 William Ashton to James Butts for \$500 lot - junction of John and a certain Cross Street running north and south W on Cross St 120'; N on Williams Thayer; E on Betsy Ashton; S on John St. - Deed Book 44, page 206, in Providence City Hall.
- 1822 James Butts to Edward Underwood for \$500 lot as above but Thayer St not named. No house mentioned. - Deed Book 46, page 167 in Providence City Hall.
- 1827 Edward Underwood to Abigail Greene for \$2000. Same bounds with dwelling house. - Deed Book 53, page 162, in Providence City Hall.
- 1834 Abigail Greene to Christopher Pierce. W by Thayer St; S by John St; E by Elisha Wells; N by Williams Thayer. - Deed Book 65, page 210, in Providence City Hall.
- 1868 Christopher Pierce to Sabra, Walter and Henry Horton for \$6,025 lot, with dwelling house and other buildings corner John and Thayer; W by Thayer St; S by John St; E by Lucius Horton; N by Williams Thayer.
- 1924 John Thayer Company.

B. Date of erection: 1822-1827.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a two-story, frame house, one of the few examples in Providence of a house four bays wide, with an unusual elevated basement, built in the 1820's.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: About 36' (four-bay south front) x 30', rectangular house, two stories on elevated basement.
2. Foundations: Brick.
3. Wall construction: Frame, clapboards with wood corner quoins.
4. Chimneys: Two brick chimneys, in west and east walls.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance in basement level. Frontispiece has deep pediment with broken horizontal cornice, supported on curved brackets meeting paneled pilasters, four-panel door, sunk panels. Greek Revival moldings, louvered shutters on doorway, side lights.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, molded frames. Adjustable louvered shutters.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof. Asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Projecting molded cornice covered by wood eaves trough, drilled ovolo bed mold.
 - c. Dormers: Small monitor at center of roof, small gabled dormer on rear.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central entrance-stair hall. Separate apartment on ground floor rented to other tenants;

main floor - parlor at southwest with small study on northwest, dining room in narrower room on east, probably originally two small rooms. Kitchen at rear on northeast. Bedrooms on second floor. Rear stair hall at northwest.

2. Stairways: Straight run, open well, open string stair. Fan ornament on step ends on upper run from main floor to second floor. Railing from main floor to second floor has molded rail and three slender rectangular balusters per step. Later turned balusters on lower run, turned newels.
3. Flooring: Wide board floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, papered or painted. Wainscot in principal rooms and hallway marked off in panels by delicate moldings.
5. Doorways and doors: Molded doorways. Six-panel wood doors.
6. Trim: Window trim similar to doors. Unusual pulvinated reeded band used under chair rail and on face of door and window architraves.
7. Hardware: Later mortise locks with white porcelain knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Central with radiators. Fireplaces have one-story wood mantels. Parlor fireplace has deeply projecting mantel shelf, paired colonettes and carved center plaque on high entablature.

D. Site

1. Orientation: Faces south at northeast corner John and Thayer Streets, on sidewalk on south and west sides, small service yard on north.
2. Enclosures: Wood fences.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
May 1962.